

June 22, 2015

VIA EMAIL

Tom Torlakson
State Superintendent of Public Instruction
California Department of Education
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Karen Stapf Walters
Executive Director
California State Board of Education
California State Board of Education
1430 N Street, Suite #5111
Sacramento, CA 95814
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RE: 2014-2015 History-Social Science Framework Update

Dear Superintendent Torlakson and Ms. Stapf Walters:

We are writing to encourage you to complete the revision and approval of the History-Social Science Framework as quickly as possible.

Based on our verbal communication with Tom Adams, Executive Director of the Instructional Quality Commission, we understand that the History-Social Science Subject Matter Committee (HSS SMC) is prepared to begin working on revisions to the grade level chapters of the History-Social Science Framework, responding to the extensive public comment on those chapters. Additionally, we understand that the HSS SMC will need to engage a group of content experts as consultants to ensure the framework revisions are historically accurate and consistent with the historical scholarship. The consultants who will be hired need to be approved by the State Board of Education, a process that is not expected to conclude until March 2016. In order to expedite the framework revision process, which has already been considerably delayed, we are hopeful that you will allow the HSS SMC to simultaneously work on its version of the revisions while the consultant hiring and approval process is underway, rather than having to wait until the consultants are hired to begin the revision process.

We are advocating for this simultaneous approach because it represents the best chance of ensuring that a revised History-Social Science Framework can be presented to the State Board of Education and approved prior to the start of the 2016-2017 school year. As a coalition of organizations and individuals who have been working with the Instructional Quality Commission in support of changes to the framework to comply with

the Fair, Accurate, Inclusive, and Respectful Education Act (FAIR Education Act) concerning the inclusion of LGBT Americans, we feel strongly that it is incumbent on the California Department of Education and State Board of Education to move as swiftly as possible to update the History-Social Science Framework. An updated framework will provide essential and critical guidance to school districts and educators on what content to teach related to LGBT history. The FAIR Education Act was enacted on January 1, 2012, but most schools are failing to comply because they have not yet included any lessons about LGBT Americans in history and social science classes as they await guidance from the state on what topics to include and at which grade levels.

The FAIR Education Act amended the Education Code to require that social science instruction include “the role and contributions of...lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender Americans, [and] persons with disabilities...to the economic, political, and social development of California and the United States of America” (Cal. Educ. Code §51204.5). The law also prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in textbooks, classroom materials and school-sponsored activities.

Students need to feel self-confident and safe, both emotionally and physically, in order to learn and thrive in school. They are denied a safe school environment when they are exposed to negative stereotypes in classroom materials and school-sponsored activities. Studies have shown that including the contributions of LGBT people in instructional materials is linked to greater student safety and lower rates of bullying.

Should you have any questions regarding our recommendation to expedite the approval of the revised History-Social Science Framework, please contact Judy Appel at judy@ourfamily.org.

Sincerely,



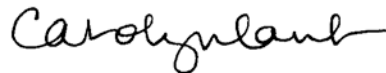
Judy Appel, Executive Director
Our Family Coalition



Rick Zbur, Executive Director
Equality California



Don Romesburg, Representative
Committee on LGBT History



Carolyn Laub, Consultant to LGBT
Advocacy Organizations

cc: Bill Honig, Co-Chair, History-Social Science Subject Matter Committee
Nancy McTygue, Co-Chair, History-Social Science Subject Matter Committee
Tom Adams, Executive Director, Instructional Quality Commission